

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action of January 14, 2008 (Office Action). As this response is timely filed within the 3-month shortened statutory period, no fee is believed due. However, the Examiner is expressly authorized to charge any deficiencies to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

Claims Rejections – 35 USC § 101

Claims 34 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the claimed invention was alleged to be directed to non-statutory subject matter. More specifically, it was asserted in the Office Action that Claims 34-35 can be considered to be software in accordance with applicant's specification (page 14, paragraph 46, "The present invention also can be embedded in a computer program product, which comprises all the features enabling the implementation of the methods described herein, and which when loaded in a computer system is able to carry out these methods.>").

It is noted that just because the present invention **can** be embedded in a computer program product, it does not mean that Claims 34 and 35 are directed to a computer program. It is also stated in paragraph 45 of the specification that the present invention can be realized in hardware, software, or a combination of hardware and software. Applicants believes that the language of Claims 34 and 35 clearly indicates that they are not software per se; rather, they comprise different modules or means which can be implemented as hardware or a combination of hardware and software. For example, means for conducting a user specific search or for receiving a user specific search pattern is clearly a device. A software per se cannot receive any user input.

Applicants thus respectfully request that the claims rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 101 be withdrawn.

Claims Rejections – 35 USC §§ 102 & 103

Claims 1-2, 6-20, and 24-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Landon, *et al.*, "Deploying Lotus Sametime on the eServer iSeries Server," Redbooks, June 2002 (hereinafter Landon). Claims 3-5 and 21-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Landon in view of U.S. Published Patent Application 2004/0267887 to Berger, *et al.* (hereinafter Berger).

Although Applicants respectfully disagree with the claim rejections, Applicants have amended the claims so as to expedite prosecution of the present application. It is expressly noted, however, that the amendments should not be interpreted as the surrender of any subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully reserve the right to present the original version of any of the amended claims in any future divisional or continuation applications from the present application.

Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 12, 16, 19, 30, and 34-35 to further emphasize certain aspects of the invention. As discussed herein, the claim amendments are fully supported throughout the Specification. No new matter has been introduced by the claim amendments.

Aspects of Applicants Invention

It may be helpful to reiterate certain aspects of Applicants' invention prior to addressing the cited references. One embodiment of the invention, as typified by amended Claim 1, is a collaborative computing method.

The method can include providing a collaborative computing system comprising at least one instant messaging client. The collaborative computing system including presence awareness features that automatically detect online entities that are logged into the collaborative computing system. See, e.g., Specification, paragraph [0043].

The method also can include initializing the instant messaging client within a graphical user interface of the collaborative computing system and specifying at least one

search limitation. The search limitation prevents users other than users belonging to a predetermined class of users from accessing data records pertaining to one or more predetermined online entities and from receiving data indicating an online presence of one or more predetermined online entities. See, e.g., Specification, paragraph [0031].

The method further can include receiving a search initializing action from the graphical user interface, responsive to the receiving step, presenting search input fields within the graphical user interface, receiving input via the input fields that specifies a search pattern, subject to the at least one search limitation, searching at least one record source for online entities that satisfy the search pattern using the presence awareness features, and displaying a search result from the searching step within the graphical user interface. See, e.g., Specification, paragraphs [0043] and [0044].

The method additionally can include selecting at least one of the online entities displayed in the search result and establishing a software-enhanced communication not limited to instant messaging between a user of the instant messaging client and the selected online entity. See, e.g., Specification, paragraph [0044].

The Claims Define Over the Cited References

Collaboration software, such as Lotus Sametime™, integrates a multitude of collaborative software components, including instant messaging components, chat components, Web conferencing components, co-browsing components, e-mail components, and the like. The instant messaging component of Lotus Sametime™ can provide a degree of presence awareness, as all online users can be registered with an instant messaging service. This presence awareness is indicated through the presentation of currently online users within an instant messaging graphical user interface (GUI). The integrated nature of Lotus Sametime™ permits any of a variety of software-enhanced communications that include instant messaging as well as Web conferencing, chatting, co-browsing, and the like to be initiated from the instant messaging GUI. See

Specification, paragraph [0005].

The presence awareness capabilities of the existing Lotus Sametime™, however, are limited by the manner in which online users are presented within the instant messaging GUI. Namely, the online users are not presented alphabetically or in a manner which is easily searchable by a user. This shortcoming has generally not been noticed, as typical instant messaging GUIs only display a limited number of registered contacts; i.e., those that have a point of presence. As this number grows, however, the usefulness of the inherent presence awareness capabilities provided within instant messaging GUIs diminishes since online users become increasingly difficult to locate within the GUI. Consequently, the presence awareness capability of the existing Lotus Sametime™ does not inherently result in usable, large scale presence awareness capabilities that can be applied to large organizations. At the time of the invention, no other conventional collaboration software or software application extension includes presence awareness capabilities that can be used to enable user friendly, software-enhanced communications between people within a large organization. See Specification, paragraph [0006].

The present invention solves the above problem by integrating an online entity search capability into the instant messaging GUI such that a user of the instant messaging GUI can select an online entity from the search result that satisfies the search pattern and initiate an software-enhanced communication session, which does not have to be instant messaging, between the user and the selected online entity.

Landon describes the Lotus Sametime™ existing before the present invention. Landon does not disclose integrating online entity search capability into the instant messaging GUI such that a user of the instant messaging GUI can select an online entity from the search result that satisfies the search pattern and initiate an software-enhanced communication session not limited to instant messaging between the user and the selected online entity, as recited in the amended claims.

It was asserted in the Office Action that Landon discloses receiving a search initializing action from the GUI (page 201, Creating a buddy list and group); responsive to the receiving step, presenting search input fields within the GUI (page 201, Figure 6-7); receiving input via the input fields that specifies a search pattern (page 201, Figure 6-7 and creating a buddy list and group); subject to the at least one search limitation, searching at least one record source for online entities that satisfy the search pattern (page 201, step 2-3); and displaying a search result from the searching step within the GUI (page 201, step 2). However, it is noted that Figure 6-7 of Landon shows a Sametime Chat applet window and the "only Sametime function available here is Chat." The user can find a person to contact by clicking "Browse" and then searching in the Domino Directory. It is noted that the Domino Directory, which is referred to as the Public Address Book or Name and Address Book, is a database that Domino creates automatically on every server. It is a directory of information about users, servers, and groups, as well as custom entries a user may add. Searching the Domino Directory cannot find online entities based on presence awareness. In other words, the person to contact found using the Domino Directory is not necessarily online.

Accordingly, Landon fails to disclose or suggest each and every element of Claims 1, 12, 16, 19, 30, and 34-35, as amended. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that amended Claims 1, 12, 16, 19, 30, and 34-35 define over the prior art. Furthermore, as each of the remaining claims dependents from Claim 1, 12, 16, 19, 30, and 34-35 while reciting additional features, Applicants further respectfully submit that the remaining claims likewise define over the prior art.

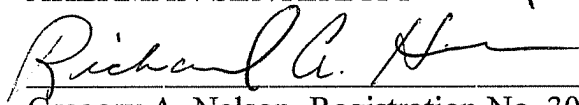
Applicants thus respectfully request that the claims rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 & 103 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

AKERMAN SENTERFITT

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard A. Hinson", is written over a horizontal line.

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